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NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES, INC.  
COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

November 4, 2015

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Dr. Laurie L. Patton  
President  
Middlebury College  
Old Chapel, 3rd Floor  
Middlebury, VT 05753

Dear President Patton:

I am pleased to inform you that at its meeting on September 25, 2015, the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education considered the interim (fifth-year) report submitted by Middlebury College and voted to take the following action:

that the interim (fifth-year) report submitted by Middlebury College be accepted;

that the comprehensive evaluation scheduled for Fall 2019 be confirmed.

The Commission gives the following reasons for its action.

The interim (fifth-year) report submitted by Middlebury College was accepted because it responded to the issues raised by the Commission in its letter of April 4, 2012, addressed each of the eleven standards, and included a reflective essay on student learning and success.

The Commission commends Middlebury College for a comprehensive, beautifully written interim report that was developed through a participatory process involving individuals throughout the campus community. We note with approval the progress the College has made to address the areas of emphasis specified for the report, including the development of a systematic process for external program review and the investment of nearly \$14 million to rehabilitate many of the 23 buildings at the Bread Loaf campus of which \$9.1 million was used to renovate the Bread Loaf Inn. In addition, the adoption of a new model of governance that better reflects the "diversified and global institution" Middlebury has become and enables the College to respond more effectively to the "risks and complex challenges" facing higher education is noteworthy. The new board structure comprises a Prudential Committee, five Standing Committees, and three Boards of Overseers; the position of provost has been reinstated to provide oversight and leadership for all academic programs. The report also provides an update on the ongoing integration of Monterey Institute of International Studies into Middlebury College; we note with favor the

centralization of key functions and the appointment of an associate provost for integration strategies.

Middlebury College's response to the eleven standards effectively integrates information from the Interim Report data forms and provides clear and concise information about the significant changes and progress made in each area. We take favorable note of the establishment of a Planning Team to oversee annual resource planning enabling greater participation by department heads. The College's expansion of the Posse Program to include partners in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles is noteworthy, as is the institution's careful tracking of retention and graduation rates for a variety of students, including underrepresented students. We are pleased to learn of the efforts of the working group convened to enhance faculty governance structures and of the "significant reorganization" of the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Research.

The reflective essay prepared by Middlebury College provides evidence of the enormous strides the institution has made in its assessment practices. We note with favor that the College has adopted eleven college-wide learning outcomes, has completed assessment plans at the course and departmental levels, and has extended its assessment practices to graduate programs. The essay also provides details about the recent alumni/ae survey undertaken by the College and the ways in which the institution has used the results for improvement, including a full evaluation of the ways in which "oral communication skills" – identified by alumni/ae as an area in which they did not feel well prepared by the College – are taught in the undergraduate program and the implementation of pedagogical changes to enhance students' skills in this area. The Commission is gratified to learn that the projects undertaken by the College have contributed to the development of an "institutional culture of assessment" and that Middlebury College intends to seek "greater coordination and integration" of assessment efforts across programs in the future.

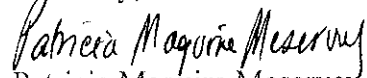
The scheduling of a comprehensive evaluation in Fall, 2019 is consistent with Commission policy requiring each accredited institution to undergo a comprehensive evaluation at least once every ten years.

The Commission expressed appreciation for the report submitted by Middlebury College and hopes that its preparation has contributed to institutional improvement. It appreciates your cooperation in the effort to provide public assurance of the quality of higher education in New England.

You are encouraged to share this letter with all of the institution's constituencies. It is Commission policy to inform the chairperson of the institution's governing board of action on its accreditation status. In a few days we will be sending a copy of this letter to Marna Whittington. The institution is free to release information about the report and the Commission's action to others, in accordance with the enclosed policy on Public Disclosure of Information about Affiliated Institutions.

If you have any questions about the Commission's action, please contact Barbara Brittingham, President of the Commission.

Sincerely,

  
Patricia Maguire Meservey

PMM/sjp

cc: Marna Whittington

Enclosure



**NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES  
COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

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**Public Disclosure of Information  
About Affiliated Institutions**

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The following policy governs the release of information regarding the status of affiliated colleges and universities by institutions and by the Commission.

**1. Release of Information by Institutions Regarding Their Accreditation  
Following Commission Action**

At the conclusion of the evaluation process institutions are encouraged to make publicly available information about their accreditation status including the findings of team reports and any obligations or requirements established by Commission action, as well as any plans to address stated concerns. Because of the potential to be misleading, institutions are asked not to publish or otherwise disseminate excerpts from these materials.

While the Commission does not release copies of self-studies, progress reports, evaluation reports, or other documents related to the accreditation of individual institutions, it believes it to be good practice for institutions to make these materials available, in their entirety, after notification of Commission action.

While the Commission does not initiate public release of information on actions of show cause or deferral, if such information is released by the institution in question or is otherwise made public, the Commission will respond to related inquiries and may issue a public statement.

If an institution releases or otherwise disseminates information which misrepresents or distorts its accreditation status, the institution will be notified and asked to take corrective action publicly correcting any misleading information it may have disseminated, including but not limited to the accreditation status of the institution, the contents of evaluation reports, and the Commission actions with respect to the institution. Should it fail to do so, the Commission, acting through its President, will release a public statement in such form and content as it deems desirable providing correct information. This may include release of notification letters sent by the Commission to the institution, and/or a press release.

## 2. Published Statement on Accredited Status

The Commission asks that one of the following statements be used for disclosing on its website and in catalogues, brochures, advertisements, etc., that the institution is accredited.

An institution may wish to include within its website, catalogue or other material a statement which will give the consuming public a better idea of the meaning of regional accreditation. When that is the case, the Commission requests that the following statement be used in its entirety:

\_\_\_\_\_ College (University) is accredited by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc.

Accreditation of an institution of higher education by Commission indicates that it meets or exceeds criteria for the assessment of institutional quality periodically applied through a peer review process. An accredited college or university is one which has available the necessary resources to achieve its stated purposes through appropriate educational programs, is substantially doing so, and gives reasonable evidence that it will continue to do so in the foreseeable future. Institutional integrity is also addressed through accreditation.

Accreditation by the Commission is not partial but applies to the institution as a whole. As such, it is not a guarantee of every course or program offered, or the competence of individual graduates. Rather, it provides reasonable assurance about the quality of opportunities available to students who attend the institution.

Inquiries regarding the accreditation status by the Commission should be directed to the administrative staff of the institution. Individuals may also contact:

**Commission on Institutions of Higher Education**  
**New England Association of Schools and Colleges**  
**3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100, Burlington, MA 01803-4514**  
**(781) 425 7785**  
**E-Mail: [cihe@neasc.org](mailto:cihe@neasc.org)**

The shorter statement that an institution may choose for announcing its accredited status follows:

\_\_\_\_\_ College (University) is accredited by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc.

Inquiries regarding the accreditation status by the Commission should be directed to the administrative staff of the institution. Individuals may also contact:

**Commission on Institutions of Higher Education**  
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**E-Mail: [cihe@neasc.org](mailto:cihe@neasc.org)**

Accreditation by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education has reference to the institution as a whole. Therefore, statements like “fully accredited” or “this program is accredited by the Commission” or “this degree is accredited by the Commission” are incorrect and should not be used.

### 3. **Published Statement on Candidate Status**

An institution granted Candidate for Accreditation status must use the following statement whenever it makes reference to its affiliation with the New England Association:

\_\_\_\_\_ College (University) has been granted Candidate for Accreditation status by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc. Candidacy for Accreditation is a status of affiliation with the Commission which indicates that the institution has achieved initial recognition and is progressing toward accreditation.

Candidacy is not accreditation nor does it assure eventual accreditation.

Inquiries regarding the status of an institution affiliated with the Commission should be directed to the administrative staff of the college or university. Individuals may also contact:

**Commission on Institutions of Higher Education**  
**New England Association of Schools and Colleges**  
**3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100, Burlington, MA 01803-4514**  
**(781) 425 7785**  
**E-Mail: [cihe@neasc.org](mailto:cihe@neasc.org)**

### 4. **Public Disclosure of Information about Affiliated Institutions by the Commission**

The Commission publishes the following information about member and candidate institutions on its website:

- Name of the institution
- Accreditation status (member or candidate)
- Address
- Phone and fax numbers
- CEO name and title
- Degree levels awarded
- Dates of initial accreditation (or candidacy), last review and next review
- Locations of off-campus instructional sites

The Commission may also publish on its website a public statement about an action taken regarding a member or candidate institution when further information about the action and the Commission's reasons for taking the action would be helpful to members of the public.

Upon inquiry, the Commission will release the following information about affiliated institutions:

- The date of initial accreditation and/or when candidacy was granted;
- The date and nature (comprehensive or focused) of the most recent on-site evaluation and subsequent Commission action on the institution's accredited status;
- The date and nature (comprehensive or focused) of the next scheduled on-site evaluation;
- Submission date and action taken on the most recent written report required by the Commission;
- The extent of, or limitations on, the status of affiliation;
- In cases of adverse action (denial or withdrawal of candidacy or accreditation, placing an institution on probation), the Commission's reasons for that status and, in the case of probation, its plans to monitor the institution. The Commission, in consultation with the institution, will prepare a written statement incorporating the above information. The Commission reserves the right to make the final determination of the nature and content of the statement. The institution will also be offered the opportunity to make its official comment; if the institution does make an official comment, the comment will be made available by the Commission;

- For institutions whose candidacy or accreditation has been withdrawn, the date of, and reasons for, withdrawal.

The Commission recognizes that, to be fully understood, information about the accredited status of institutions must be placed within the context of the policies and procedures of the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education. In responding to inquiries, the Commission will endeavor to do so.

The Commission does not generally provide information about deferments of action on candidate or accreditation status, or show-cause orders. However, if such information is released by the institution in question, the Commission will respond to related inquiries and may issue its own statement.

Adverse actions (placement of an institution on probation, denial of candidate status or accreditation, and withdrawal of candidacy or accreditation) are communicated when the decision becomes final (i.e., when the institution does not appeal or when the appeals process is completed and the decision is upheld). The Commission, at its discretion, may make the adverse action public before the decision is final or the appeal is completed. In so doing, the Commission will provide information about the appeal process.

## 5. Public Disclosure of Institutional Actions

Within 30 days after the action on accreditation status is taken, the Commission will notify the Secretary of Education, New England state higher education officers, appropriate accrediting agencies, and the public. Such actions include:

A final decision to:

Grant candidacy or accreditation

Continue an institution in accreditation

Deny or withdraw the candidacy or accreditation of an institution

Place an institution on probation

Approve substantive change (e.g., moving to a higher degree level)

A decision by an accredited or candidate institution to voluntarily withdraw from affiliation with the Commission.

*November 1998*

*September 2001*

*April 2010*

*September 2011*

*Editorial Changes, March 2014*

*April 2015*

